

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP
STYLES OF ERNEST J. KING AND CHESTER W. NIMITZ**

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In a constantly changing world threatened by the likelihood of terrorist acts, the American people need military leaders who clearly demonstrate an understanding of American core values, and who are both competent and morally focused. In order to produce military leaders who meet these qualifications and who can successfully meet the future challenges America faces, it is important to develop and refine those leaders early and help them understand how to create and refine a successful leadership style. The process of developing leadership styles, however, is not easy and it requires a prodigious amount of determination, time, and planning from prospective future leaders. It also requires military training institutions to align their curriculums to promote leadership, as well as, to provide guidance and mentoring in order to help develop these future leaders. One way to help develop leaders is to show them examples of both successful and flawed military leadership styles. World War II leaders Admirals Ernest J. King and Chester W. Nimitz provide contrasting examples of naval leadership.				
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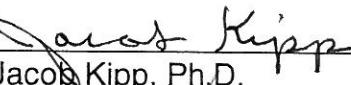
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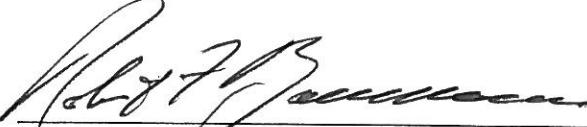
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Abstract

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP STYLES OF ERNEST J. KING AND CHESTER W. NIMITZ, by MAJ James R. Hill, USAR, 58 pp.

In a constantly changing world threatened by the likelihood of terrorist acts, the American people need military leaders who clearly demonstrate an understanding of American core values, and who are both competent and morally focused. In order to produce military leaders who meet these qualifications and who can successfully meet the future challenges America faces, it is important to develop and refine those leaders early and help them understand how to create and refine a successful leadership style. The process of developing leadership styles, however, is not easy and it requires a prodigious amount of determination, time, and planning from prospective future leaders. It also requires military training institutions to align their curriculums to promote leadership, as well as, to provide guidance and mentoring in order to help develop these future leaders.

One way to help develop leaders is to provide examples of both successful and flawed military leadership styles. There are many cases of each in American history. In particular, World War II leaders Admirals Ernest J. King and Chester W. Nimitz provide contrasting examples of naval leadership. An examination of the leadership styles of these two naval officers provides useful examples which future leaders can consider when reflecting on their own leadership styles. After careful review, it soon becomes evident that the leadership style of Nimitz closely aligned with the leadership styles of Generals George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower, two World War II leaders I closely examined in my previous Master's thesis. In addition, it also becomes evident that King was a diametrically different leader from these three leaders. He provides an example of a leader who was cold, harsh, and morally bankrupt. As result, reviewing the leadership styles of these World War II leaders will benefit future leaders as well as those they lead.

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Introduction

Leadership development is vitally important for shaping America's future military forces. In addition, most American citizens look to military leaders as examples of righteousness in American behavior.¹ They view officers and enlisted service members, both men and women, as assertive, tested, selfless serving patriots who work for the betterment of all Americans. That is why they reach out their hands to service members passing by and in a sincere and uplifting voice offer thanks and praise for their service to our country. It is therefore essential for the future of America that those service members who are selected to lead do so with competence, as well as a sense of moral righteousness, honesty, and integrity. These latter attributes are inherently part of American core democratic values, and they are more important qualities than finding leaders who are simply technically competent and knowledgeable about military operations or plans. In, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Dr. Ronald A. Heifetz highlighted the following about leadership in America, "Leadership arouses passions because leadership engages our values. So the very concept of leadership is 'value-laden.'"² Too often, leaders in the military who are knowledgeable and competent in their fields are placed in leadership positions yet they do not lead with a moral compass. Current military leaders must carefully vet prospective leaders in order to validate that these prospects are competent, have integrity, are honest and morally focused, and that they are not swayed by temptations that offer wealth or personal gratifications. Leaders of this caliber will guide those they lead, and they will serve as a beacon of leadership for all Americans because they will inspire respect, faith, and the type of American idealism that is possible in each person. Indeed, Americans view our military leaders as national sentinels for our country and they should be nothing less.

¹ Righteous: acting in accord with divine or moral law; free from guilt or sin (Merriam-Webster On-Line: <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/righteous>).

² Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), p.1.

Finding leaders who are competent, morally focused and truly ideal Americans is not an easy task, but they do exist and some of them are in uniform today. Too often, however, many leaders in uniform do not measure up to the national sentinel image that most Americans want and expect in military leaders. In fact, throughout my military career, I have been in organizations in which I have worked with service members who were morally bankrupt, despite being technically competent in their jobs. In one instance, I worked with a senior officer who was in a key leadership position, and I was shocked to learn that that this highly competent and experienced professional (and a person that I trusted) compromised his career and his integrity for a personal indiscretion. His indiscretion cost him his honor, integrity, and his family and all for his own personal gratification. Also, throughout his downfall, his decisions became increasingly corrupt and narcissistic and it directly affected the unit. This example speaks volumes to me about the importance of putting competent as well as morally focused people in leadership positions. They must always be above reproach and set the example, and this quality, more than their intellectual and professional skills, matters most.

Some may challenge this argument and suggest that this aforementioned criterion is too difficult to find in leaders today. However, this is a poor excuse to lessen leadership standards in order to fill job vacancies. The reason why it is not easy to find competent and morally focused leaders today is that most Americans give in to living life too easily and many do not understand how to work hard to achieve goals and aspirations nor do they have the patience for doing so. More frequently than not, Americans take short cuts and look for easy pathways to success rather than rolling up their sleeves and going to work. In essence, many Americans do not consider the lives of those that have come before them; indeed, Americans today are concerned for the here and now, and they therefore fail to consider how their grandparents, great grandparents, or even our fore fathers lived their lives. The generation of Americans that lived through the Great Depression and World War II understand what it is like to live through difficult and uncertain times. Most of them also know what it is like to work hard and to sacrifice, and they further know

that it is important for Americans to be honorable, have integrity, and to lead morally focused lives.

With this in mind, I wrote this monograph as a continuation of my previous Master's thesis in Military Arts and Sciences (MMAS), in which I made a comparative analysis of the leadership styles of Generals George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower. In that thesis, leadership style was considered based on how the following factors helped shape each leader's style: upbringing in small rural towns; the influence of religion and faith; how each considered officer mentorship; and how each perceived duty, discipline, and subordinate soldiers, both officer and enlisted. Also, as stated in my thesis, both Marshall and Eisenhower were competent, professional officers who were focused on improving the army, led morally focused lives, and loyally fulfilled their duties as army officers. Neither was intellectually strong as a student and both openly acknowledged this. However, what they lacked in academic skills they both compensated for in the army with a tireless work ethic. Further, both leaders worked so diligently that they needed medical attention because of the stress they suffered. They could not help working so strenuously because the army was their first priority and the real focus in their lives. In short, they lived and breathed the army and did all that they could to change and improve it for those that followed. Since it was the focus of their lives, they spent a great deal of time genuinely concerned about the capabilities of the army as well as the health and welfare of Soldiers.

I could have written a similar summation about the leadership style of Admiral Chester J. Nimitz. He lived his life and led in a way that was similar to Marshall and Eisenhower. Indeed, he was a superb naval officer and America was fortunate to have him as Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet during World War II. The same could not, however, be said of Admiral Ernest J. King. In many ways, he was the antithesis of Nimitz, Marshall, and Eisenhower. It is evident that King was smart and intellectually capable of performing satisfactorily in his position as the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). He was a naval technician of sorts because he was knowledgeable about the workings of the navy on a strategic, operational, and tactical level, but he did not see

the larger aspects of military leadership. In fact, as this monograph will show, there is insurmountable evidence that he was a morally bankrupt leader in almost every regard. He was egotistical, self-serving, lecherous, condescending, confrontational, indignant, and downright mean-spirited to his peers as well as those subordinate to him. This caused numerous problems not only with other naval leaders, but also between the Army and the Navy and even between other navies in the Alliance, noticeably Great Britain. In this regard, an analysis of his leadership style serves as a great foil against the leadership styles of Nimitz, Marshall, and Eisenhower.

As indicated by the preceding brief summative on King and Nimitz, this monograph will not consider all the influences on leadership style that were considered in my previous MMAS thesis, and this is largely because of the page restriction for this monograph (a restriction I have mildly exceeded). Instead, this monograph will consider how the following factors influenced the leadership styles of King and Nimitz: their small town upbringings; their views about religion and faith; and their views about duty, discipline, and subordinates. In addition, it is written with the sincere intent of encouraging American service members to consider carefully how they lead while in military service to this country. Further, it is intended to encourage officers to consider their leadership styles carefully and to consider incorporating the beneficial, time-tested, and salient aspects of leadership demonstrated by Nimitz, and to avoid the immoral and unprofessional pitfalls King exhibited. In this regard, this monograph will be especially useful for leaders who mentor others, shape and train new recruits, and for those leaders that make tough calls every day about the lives of those they lead.

The primary question that this monograph considers is how do military officers develop their leadership styles? As mentioned in my previous thesis, in order to successfully answer this question, it is necessary to examine, as closely as possible, a person's life experiences in order to see how those experiences shaped his or her understanding of what leadership is in the military. If through examination it is possible to see how successful officers developed their leadership styles, then that information might be useful for current and future officers. In *Napoleon's Last*

Victory and the Emergence of Modern War, Robert M. Epstein made the following astute comment about leadership, “Officers and interested civilians study war on their own, very often the lives of great commanders, in a search for role models to unlock the secrets of leadership.”³ I would agree with that comment, and it is based on that idea that I have selected leaders from World War II as case studies for examining leadership styles.

Invariably, many find solace in simply stating that great leaders are born and thus leadership abilities are God given. As I stated previously in my MMAS thesis, this argument is eugenics based and suggests that leaders are born with inherent genetic attributes that provide them natural leadership abilities.⁴ Edgar F. Puryear, Jr. asked General J. Lawton Collins, the Commander of the VII Corps in the Army during World War II, what he thought about leadership. He responded, “Only a limited number of people combine the necessary qualities of character, integrity, intelligence, and a willingness to work, which leads to a knowledge of their profession to become successful leaders. These are God-given talents we inherit from our forefathers.” He also added, however, that, “There are...techniques of leadership that anybody can learn if given a modicum of intelligence and a willingness to work.”⁵ Collins’ position was mostly eugenics based, and it demonstrates that he did not think society or environment had much of an impact on the development of an officer’s leadership abilities. When Puryear asked General Omar Bradley the same question, he noted that Bradley thought some leaders were born with certain qualities of leadership such as a good physique, good mental capacity, and curiosity, but that there were other leadership qualities that needed to be developed such as job competence and

³ Robert M. Epstein, *Napoleon’s Last Victory and the Emergence of Modern War* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1994), 1.

⁴ Eugenics: a science that deals with the improvement (as by control of human mating) of hereditary qualities of a race or breed (Merriam-Webster Dictionary On-Line: <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/eugenics>).

⁵ Edgar F. Puryear, Jr., *Nineteen Stars: A Study in Military Character and Leadership* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1992), xi.

learning from others.⁶ Admiral James L. Holloway III, a retired Chief of Naval Operations (1974-78), later echoed that comment. He provided the forward to Puryear's later book, *American Admirals: The Moral Imperatives of Naval Command*. Holloway indicated the following, "The truth is that leaders are made. But the proper material is required for their making. There are certain physical attributes within the human race-some genetic, some environmental, and some seemingly spontaneous-that when identified can be built on and developed into powerful traits of military leadership."⁷ Although Holloway's understanding is slightly different from Bradley's, both retired leaders considered military leadership as something that can be shaped.

To some degree, Collins' as well as Bradley's and Holloway's comments have merit. Certainly military leaders need to have the intellectual ability to learn and remember information, and they must also have the physical ability and stamina to lead. They could not, for example, be effective leaders if they could not learn and retain information, or if they were physically unable to lead. Unlike Holloway, Collins and Bradley, however, gave short shrift to the impact that society can have on the development of leadership ideals and practices.

Each officer has a unique leadership style that is a reflection of his or her personal beliefs, leadership ideals, and military practices to which they adhere. Because each person has unique life experiences, it is not easy to scrutinize which beliefs, ideals, or practices produce successful leadership styles. Together, however, these characteristics will provide a framework for analyzing and understanding leadership styles. In addition, there are some nuances of leadership in the navy that must be considered. In order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership, Puryear wrote *American Admirals*, which is a book primarily about naval leadership. As with his previous books on leadership, Puryear recognizes the

⁶ Ibid., x.

⁷ Edgar F. Puryear, Jr., *American Admirals: The Moral Imperatives of Naval Command* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), xiii.

importance or morality in leaders and that there are certain traits that enable naval officers to be successful leaders.

This monograph closely examines the lives of King and Nimitz in the hope of providing two examples of leadership styles for current and future military leaders to consider. Much of the research on both officers is limited to secondary sources and that is due to the fact that both officers wanted to keep many of their records out of historical analysis. The only authorized biographical study done on Nimitz was completed by E. B. Potter, an historian approved by the widowed Mrs. Nimitz. In *Nimitz*, Potter's research is thorough but it is obvious throughout his study that he is biased in favor of Nimitz.⁸ There are few biographies on King and the most thorough study was completed by Thomas B. Buell. He provides a balanced evaluation of King in his book, *Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King*.⁹ In addition to Buell's analysis, there are some works penned by King that offer a glimpse into King's leadership style and way of thinking. The most important of these are King's memoirs, which are aptly titled, *Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record*. Nonetheless, because Buell and Potter provide the most significant and thorough research on King and Nimitz, respectively, these authors are more frequently cited than others in this monograph.

⁸ E. B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2002).

⁹ Thomas B. Buell, *Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1980).

Small Town Upbringing, Military Education, and Religion

In order to understand how past military leaders developed their leadership styles, it is first necessary to consider how they were raised, and how they viewed the world in which they lived. The foundations that establish a sense of truth and understanding in a person's life develop during youth and become fine-tuned during adulthood, and that would be true for anyone whether they grew up and lived in a small or large town or even a city. Children are by their very nature young and impressionable and have an understanding that the world is in front of them. Thus, it is important to closely examine how parents, siblings, and hometown lifestyle shaped the lives of both King and Nimitz. This examination must also consider the following about their lives: the time in history they lived, the community in which they were raised, the schools they attended, and the religion or theology that they studied. Certainly this type of examination is not an exact science, but these variables can provide a great deal of insight into the way a person thinks. That clearly was true for both King and Nimitz because their upbringings significantly shaped the leaders that they became. It should also be noted, however, that just because both were raised coincidentally in small towns, that does not necessarily mean that living in small towns was an essential factor to how both developed a grounded sense of truth or community. In fact, it could be easily argued that both could have developed the same perspectives they held in life had they been raised in a large urban setting.

King's Small Town Upbringing and Military Training at the US Naval Academy

Admiral King grew up in small cottage in Lorain, Ohio, a small town near Cleveland on Lake Erie. He was born around Thanksgiving on November 23rd, 1878, and was the second son of James and Elizabeth King. His father was a merchant seaman on the Great Lakes who had also worked as a bridge builder and as a repairman in a railroad workshop. James' career path and interests had a significant impact on Ernest's life aspirations. In fact, according to Buell, "Ernest King's boyhood was largely influenced by his father. The boy loved to visit James King in the

shops, noisy, murky, and smelling of smoke and grease.”¹⁰ From his extensive exposure to this type of honest, yet hard working environment, Ernest learned to speak as the shop workers spoke-plainly and bluntly. Buell notes that, “They also could be profane, opinionated, stubborn, and self-righteous, disdaining equivocation and scorning pretention.”¹¹ It is important to understand this aspect of King’s life because this serves as a window to see how he was raised, and how he developed into the man that he became. Ernest enjoyed being a part of his father’s life so much so that he wanted to drop out of school after completing the eighth grade. His father grudgingly acquiesced with the provision that once he dropped out of school he had to stay out for at least one year. Ernest agreed and worked for a year, but then returned to school the following year after he compared the demands of a long workday versus the benefits school provided him.

In high school, King did well academically and was a popular student. Sadly, during his sophomore year in high school, his mother died, but as Buell notes, “King mentions this matter-of-factly in his memoirs without a hint of grief.”¹² An absence of significant and sincere heartfelt condolence about his mother in his memoirs is telling about how little King identified with his mother. Instead, his noticeable lack of reflection about his mother speaks volumes about how little he identified with her and also how much and how closely he identified with his father and his way of life. His lack of a connection to his mother when he was growing up may also explain why later in life he sought relationships with women. In fact, as Buell notes, “King was attracted to women, of all ages. ...He cherished their affection, retained a lifelong gratitude for their kindness, wrote to them periodically through the years, faithfully called on them whenever he visited Lorain, and remembered their funerals.”¹³ It is striking that he would do this for women outside of his family but would barely mention a word about his mother in his personal memoirs.

¹⁰ Buell, 4-14.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 5-7.

Perhaps there was more to the relationship he had with his mother than is noticeable at first glance.

Nonetheless, in addition to working with his father and working in repair shops, King also had a desire to learn about new things. He was an avid reader, and he enjoyed reading about history. Buell notes that King was very interested in the Civil War. His interest in this war is not surprising since the war was in the not too distant past and there were living veterans of the war throughout the country. This is likely where King developed an interest in serving in the military. As a result of his intellectual curiosity and interest in reading, he did well in high school and graduated as the valedictorian of his class.¹⁴ This is a noticeable contrast to how both Eisenhower and Marshall performed in secondary schools. King completed his high school education at the head of his class intellectually, albeit he graduated from a relatively small high school. However, he was a well rounded, gregarious, athletic, and assertive young man focused on attending the US Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. Buell notes that he successfully passed his entrance exam for the naval academy, and he outperformed thirty other applicants.¹⁵ As a result, his Congressman submitted his name for acceptance to the academy. He subsequently got a letter of acceptance and entered the academy the following fall in 1897.

In many respects, the naval academy opened a new way of life for King. He was alone for the first time and therefore not part of his father's coterie of friends. Instead of living near Lake Erie, he was now living on the Atlantic Ocean in squalid and decrepit plebe quarters. Buell notes that his shipmates were like him in that they "were socially homogenous-white middle-class, predominantly Protestant, and sharing similar values."¹⁶ Plebe life during this time period was brutally harsh and rules were strict and severely enforced. This, of course, afforded many plebes with an irresistible temptation to challenge the rules. King, like many others to include

¹⁴ Ibid., 7.

¹⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

Eisenhower and to a lesser extent Marshall, could not avoid the temptation and enjoyed breaking rules such as smoking and drinking. Nonetheless, he also understood what he needed to do to achieve the rank of cadet Battalion Commander, a position he coveted because it was a position of power and prestige. He achieved this position because he demonstrated that he had an “ability to influence others.”¹⁷ His leadership position also came at a time when the US was initiating hostilities with the Spanish in the Spanish-American War (1898). The role of the navy during this conflict cannot be underscored and this undoubtedly reaffirmed to King that he had chosen the correct career path. In fact, he finagled and politicked friends to get orders so that he could go to sea and participate in the war. He successfully got orders to serve aboard the *USS San Francisco* (a protected cruiser), which joined the blockade in Cuban waters and briefly came under fire from Cuban fortifications. King’s part in this war was minor, but it had a significant impact on him and he was able to parlay later his experience into other opportunities.

King functioned well as a cadet in a wartime environment, but he also demonstrated some real character flaws in his leadership ability. He was noted for being condescending to most because of his intellectual acumen. In fact, Buell notes that King’s early navy experiences demonstrated to all that “he was an egotist, intellectually arrogant and supremely confident in his ability to distinguish truth and righteousness and to reduce the complex to the simplest terms.”¹⁸ He wanted to be recognized as the best by his peers and others, and that is likely why he sought and eventually achieved the cadet command rank he coveted. As a further demonstration of his arrogant self-persona, he also went after the most sought after and best looking woman at academy balls, Ms. Mattie Egerton. He won her over, and they became a popular and quickly recognized couple on and off campus. Thus, by his senior year, he had minor combat experience, he had risen to the top cadet leadership position, he was doing exceptionally well academically, and he was dating the most sought after woman on campus. As a result of his academic rigor, he

¹⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁸ Ibid., 11.

graduated in 1901 and was fourth in his class. He also received his diploma from a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy and then Vice President of the United States, none other than Theodore Roosevelt.

Being intellectually competent and popular, however, does not by itself make a person a good military leader. King understood quickly that despite being intelligent, he did not always have the right answer, a concept that was always difficult for him to accept. This was evident when he had to interact directly with enlisted sailors who had many more years of experience at sea than he had. Buell notes that in one incident, King repeatedly failed in his efforts to bring a dingy alongside a landing and that one of the enlisted sailors in the dingy with him had to help him accomplish this basic seamanship task.¹⁹ For most officers, this humbling event would have provided a time to self reflect and to develop a sense of appreciation and respect for enlisted service members, but that was not the case with King. He hated being proved wrong, and he especially hated it when it was done so publicly. Buell notes that once King was “convinced he had the right answer, he was unyielding toward any suggestion that he might possibly be wrong.” Buell also notes that King was “stubborn,” and “fortified with a violent temper...like Olympian Zeus returned with lightening flashes and roaring thunder.”²⁰ In short, it is evident from his years as a naval cadet that King had become egotistical and uncompromising. It was perhaps because of his egoistical behavior that, following graduation, he was assigned a tour aboard the wooden sailing vessel the *USS Eagle*, a geodetic survey ship. Buell aptly summarizes that this assignment was “an inexplicable assignment for so promising an Academy graduate.”²¹ That is especially true since then President Roosevelt pushed for a rapid expansion of the navy especially with new steel ships. Considering how much he thought of himself, King certainly would have wanted to be part of the new, cutting-edge steel ships that were being produced and made ready for sea. It

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 16.

would be hard to imagine that a prominent naval academy graduate like King would have volunteered to serve aboard a wooden, dilapidated noncombat vessel. Perhaps his egotism was evident to those in position to give him his future assignment and he received his comeuppance. If this is true and the intent behind assigning him to this ship was to humble him, then it did not have the intended effect.

Nimitz's Small Town Upbringing and Military Training at the US Naval Academy

As with King, the experiences Nimitz had during his upbringing were the foundations for his leadership style. His paternal grandfather, Charles, had a significant impact on his upbringing. Emigrating from Germany, Charles had served in the US as a merchant mariner and then later as a hotel owner and operator in Fredericksburg, Texas. As Nimitz' biographer E. B. Potter notes, this hotel was well positioned in Texas and many notable guests such as Robert E. Lee, Philip Sheridan, and James Longstreet stayed there.²² During the Civil War, Charles served as a captain of a Texas rifle company in support of the Confederate Army. Following the war, he became a successful business operator in Texas and had many friends and connections. This helped him win an election to the state legislature.²³

One of Henry's sons, Chester Bernard, decided to become a cowboy and live on the range. This was a surprising occupational choice since, as Potter notes, Chester was frail, had weak lungs, and a rheumatic heart.²⁴ Despite his physical weaknesses, he did well as a cowboy and eventually married a strong willed and beautiful woman, Anna Henke. They married in 1884, and five months later she was pregnant and Chester had died. Her son, Chester William Nimitz, was born on February 24, 1885. Charles insisted that they move into his hotel and he doted on his

²² Potter, *Nimitz*, 23.

²³ Ibid., 25.

²⁴ Ibid.

daughter-in-law and his new grandson. This, then, is the beginning of the strong bond that ensued between Nimitz and his grandfather Charles.²⁵

Nimitz was raised in a household steeped in German-American traditions. The family spoke German and English equally and intermingled traditions from both cultures. Nimitz was constantly exposed to stories and experiences that his grandfather shared with him. In fact, Potter notes that Nimitz once wrote, “I didn’t know my father, because he died before I was born. But I had a wonderful white-bearded grandfather. …Between chores and homework I listened wide-eyed to stories about his youth in the German merchant marine.”²⁶ By his own account, then, it is obvious that his grandfather helped shape his interest about being a sailor. In addition, he was devoted to his mother and always helped her. In fact, Potter notes that when she was dying in 1924, Nimitz “rushed by ship and plane from maneuvers in the Pacific to his mother’s bedside in time to hear her last conscious words, ‘I knew my Valentine boy would come to see me.’”²⁷

His bond to his grandfather and mother aside, Nimitz grew up in a quiet, small Texas town. Potter notes that locals provided the following comments about Nimitz when he was younger: he was “friendly as a puppy,” he was “nicknamed Cottonhead,” and “he made many friends.”²⁸ In addition to spending time with his Grandfather Nimitz, he also liked to spend time with his Grandfather Henke. He sometimes visited him at his cattle ranch, and as Potter notes, “There he would spend the day on the range with the cowboys.”²⁹ These influences and experiences in a small, rural, Texas town clearly depicts a young man who enjoyed the adventure and the outdoors and bonded with and identified with both of his grandfathers. Clearly, these influences played an important role in how Nimitz led in the navy.

²⁵ Ibid., 26

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 28.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Shortly after Nimitz's father died, his mother married her brother-in-law William Nimitz. He earned an engineering degree from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts and returned to Texas to help run his father's hotel.³⁰ Despite Nimitz's grandfather owning a modest hotel, his new step-father and consequently his family was relatively poor. Potter notes that he was "probably poorer than any of his companions, some of whom were the sons of well-to-do ranchers." However, Potter adds, Nimitz never seemed to "develop feelings of inferiority or insecurity."³¹ When he was not working as a delivery boy to make extra money for his family, he was usually doing something physically active. Potter notes that Nimitz regularly ran, swam, and walked long distances. Academically he did well at the local high school. After school was dismissed each day, he did odd jobs, mostly landscaping, at the family hotel. At this point in his life, he viewed his future as terminating in the same small town he grew up in; however, one day, he met and spoke with two visiting West Point cadets who were enroute to San Antonio to conduct military training. Potter notes that Nimitz was "much impressed by their military bearing, their well-fitting new uniforms, and above all their air of worldly sophistication."³² The similarity in stories regarding Nimitz's piqued interest in the military and how both Eisenhower and Marshall became interested in the military is remarkable. Nonetheless, following this encounter, Nimitz tried to coordinate with his local Congressman, James Slaydon, to complete what he needed in order to take the West Point entrance examination. As Potter points out, Nimitz was too late to apply for West Point, but, as his Congressman informed him, he was able to test for the US Naval Academy. Nimitz had not even considered the Naval Academy and Potter notes that Nimitz knew nothing about it. Nonetheless, he arduously studied and eventually passed the examination. In fact, he did so well on the examination that he surpassed all the others taking the exam with him. Thus, in September 1901, the same year that King graduated from the Naval

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 29.

Academy, Nimitz entered the academy as a new plebe. It is worth noting that King early in his life wanted to attend the Naval Academy and serve in the navy, but Nimitz haphazardly learned of attending the Military Academy and then decided to pursue a career as an army officer. It was only after he was denied attendance to the Military Academy that he sought a consolation attendance at the Naval Academy and a subsequent career in the navy. In addition, it is worth mentioning the similarity with Eisenhower's endeavors in 1910 to gain entrance into the Naval Academy, but was instead redirected to the United States Military Academy.

The Importance of Religion in Leadership

As I have noted in my previous thesis about Marshall and Eisenhower, the impact of religion in a person's life is profound and helps shape how he views himself and the world, and how he understands what is right and wrong. Understanding, adhering, and practicing the tenets of one's faith is a personal experience that unquestionably shapes how people go about their lives and interact with others. Judeo-Christian beliefs, for example, shape the laws that govern the United States, and thus it can be argued that these beliefs impact Americans every day. These same beliefs and laws shape the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), which is the legal code for members of the armed services. Because it is therefore a facet of American life and life in the military, religion must be seriously considered by leaders, and how it factors into their leadership style. In an implicit manner, this concept is evident in the following excerpt from Army Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, and Agile*,

Character, a person's moral and ethical qualities, helps determine what is right and gives a leader motivation to do what is appropriate, regardless of the circumstances or the consequences. An informed ethical conscience consistent with the Army Values strengthens leaders to make the right choices when faced with tough issues. Since Army leaders seek to do what is right and inspire others to do the same, they must embody these values.³³

Although this is part of an army FM, the concepts are nonetheless relevant and applicable to those that serve in the navy. Further, understanding how military leaders consider faith should be a consideration in any curriculum of officer leadership development and in any board to consider a military leader for a command position. This could be done by having officers routinely complete a psychological profile test akin to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment or some similar pre-employment psychological profile assessment.³⁴ Based on this line of reasoning, it is

³³ Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership: Competent, Confident, and Agile* (Washington, D.C.: Army Knowledge Online (www.us.army.mil) and General Dennis J. Reimer Training and Doctrine Digital Library at (www.train.army.mil), October 12, 2006), paragraph 4-1, 35.

³⁴ Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI): The theory of psychological type was introduced in the 1920s by Carl G. Jung. The MBTI tool was developed in the 1940s by Isabel Briggs Myers and the original

the contention in this paper that American military leaders must at least well understand Judeo-Christian beliefs if they are to be moral leaders in a country that is based on these beliefs.

American military leaders should lead by example and demonstrate that they live morally righteous lives in order to guide those they lead. When leaders live morally righteous lives based on Judeo-Christian teachings, they provide their subordinates with a beacon to follow. In fact, they are really setting the example for all Americans to follow. Admiral Halloway observed the following about morality and military leadership, “an essential trait is character, a moral outlook and sense of integrity. A person without a sense of moral responsibility cannot become a military leader—a crime king, perhaps, but not a successful military leader.”³⁵ In addition, in *Naval Leadership: Voices of Experience*, authors Karel Montor, et al, note the importance of morality for naval leaders,

The leader must set a moral tone that honors morality, integrity, ethical behavior, and justice. ... Moral tone is set in a command first in the example of the leader's own behavior and second in the example of the leader's action in relation to subordinates. A leader is called to be a prophet in the organization, to reveal and correct immoral behavior, lack of integrity, unethical behavior, and injustice.³⁶

They also clarify that, “Moral tone is set in terms of attitude that discourages such things as pornography, drug use, promiscuity, drunkenness, brawling, and misconduct ashore.”³⁷ In order to help service members develop their understanding of morality, leaders should encourage those they lead to practice their faith formally by attending religious services or informally through private prayer during times of both war and peace. Again, in an implicit manner, this concept is evident in the following excerpt from army FM 6-22, “Army leaders of character lead by personal

research was done in the 1940s and '50s. This research is ongoing, providing users with updated and new information about psychological type and its applications. Today, more than two million people worldwide take the Indicator each year (<http://www.myersbriggs.org/>).

³⁵ Puryear, *American Admirals*, xiii.

³⁶ Karel Montor, Thomas M. McNicholas, Jr., Anthony J. Ciotti, Jr., Thomas H. Hutchinson III, and Jackie Eckhart Wehmueler, *Naval Leadership: Voices of Experience* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 457.

³⁷ Ibid., 458.

example and consistently act as good role models through a dedicated lifelong effort to learn and develop.”³⁸

Considering and evaluating a person’s faith and how that pertains to his or her job performance is, at the very least, a dicey proposition. Questions regarding a person’s faith potentially infringe on the First (Freedom of Speech and Religion), Fourth (Probable Cause), Fifth (Due Process), and Fourteen (Equal Protection Clause) Amendments to the US Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.³⁹ Indeed, to consider this aspect of a person’s leadership style would be hard to evaluate legally, but morality must nonetheless be addressed and vetted through some process before a member of the military is placed in a leadership role. Perhaps, as was mentioned earlier, a psychological profile should be conducted akin to a Myers-Briggs

³⁸ FM 6-22, paragraph 3-1, 23.

³⁹ The following summaries of the US Constitutional Amendments was taken from *The US Constitution Online* (<http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html#Am1>):

Amendment 1 - Freedom of Religion, Press, Expression. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Amendment 4 - Search and Seizure. “The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.”

Amendment 5 - Trial and Punishment, Compensation for Takings. “No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.”

Amendment 14 - Citizenship Rights. “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII of the Act, codified as Subchapter VI of Chapter 21 of 42 U.S.C. § 2000e [2] et seq.) “Prohibits discrimination by covered employers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. It also prohibits discrimination against an individual because of his or her association with another individual of a particular race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. An employer cannot discriminate against a person because of his interracial association with another, such as by an interracial marriage. (This was taken from the following Internet site: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1964.)

assessment. If it is not considered, then the military is simply waiting for leaders to manifest immoral behavior before they take action and remove that leader from a position of power and influence. That is the way the current vetting process seems to work. This is not, however, an effective method for removing morally bankrupt leaders from the military. Indeed, many immoral leaders, like King, understand how to use the military bureaucratic system to their advantage and are hard if not impossible to remove.

Aside from this, there are a few obvious questions about how leaders use religion to develop their leadership styles. For example, how much should leaders employ religion in the decisions they make? Also, how is faith and morality imparted by military leaders to their subordinates without coming across to them as preaching? Is it done formally through mentoring or informally by leading a morally righteous life style? Indeed this whole realm of consideration for leaders is murky and filled with legal and potentially ethical pitfalls. Yet, this is arguably the most vital aspect of an American military leader. In *Military Leadership in Pursuit of Excellence*, authors Robert L. Taylor and William Rosenbach highlighted the following comments regarding morality and leadership from Medal of Honor recipient and former Prisoner of War Admiral James B. Stockdale:

[Leaders] need to be moralists-not just poseurs who sententiously exhort men to be good, but thinkers who elucidate what the good is. This requires first and foremost a clear idea of right and wrong and the integrity to stand behind your assessment of any situation.⁴⁰

Without Judeo-Christian morals and virtues, which represent American core values, leaders cannot understand right from wrong from an American cultural perspective, they cannot truly lead other service members, nor can they set the example for Americans who see them lead. The army recognizes the importance of leaders being able to determine right from wrong and having character. This is evident in army FM 6-22, “The Army relies on leaders of integrity who posses

⁴⁰ Robert L. Taylor and William E. Rosenbach, *Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 67.

high moral standards and who are honest in word and deed.”⁴¹ As noted before, the navy would easily recognize the validity and importance of this comment.

The concept of teaching morality to service members and evaluating leaders on this basis is not a new idea. As discussed in my previous MMAS thesis, Marshall championed this when he was Chief of Staff of the Army, and he even created a brigadier general billet to manage this aspect of army readiness and training. In addition, in *The Pentagon’s Battle for the American Mind*, Lori Lyn Bogle provides numerous examples of how the military has indoctrinated Soldiers about morality and faith in an effort to guide Soldiers in a virtuous lifestyle and therefore protect the American way of life.⁴² She begins by providing examples indicating that General George Washington employed civil-military religion to Continental Soldiers during the harsh winter at Valley Forge in 1777-78 to provide religious indoctrination.⁴³ Based on this, she builds her case that the military adopted Washington’s lead and has a long established practice of teaching morality and faith to Soldiers because citizen Soldiers are the foundation of America’s national character. She notes that Washington “fostered righteousness by encouraging private morality among troops through religious instruction and his own personal example. . .He also directed the army’s chaplains to incorporate revolutionary ideology into the mandatory prayer services.” She also adds that Washington, “through his own self-imposed discipline--by curbing his anger, vanity, ambition for personal glory, wenching, gambling, and cursing-intentionally shaped his public persona to that of the American Cincinnatus, a model of civic and personal virtue upon which his officers and men could pattern their own behavior.”⁴⁴ Therefore, Washington established an unchangeable identity of the American military leader as the sentinel

⁴¹ FM 6-22, paragraph 4-30, 41.

⁴² Lori Lyn Bogle, *The Pentagon’s Battle for the American Mind* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2004).

⁴³ Ibid., 4-7.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

of national morality. He also provided the historical reference, which leaders after him needed to reference to incorporate religion in their leadership style. Bogle further notes that,

Morale, considered by the military to be ‘the rational and emotional attitudes that motivate and sustain soldiers,’ was of vital importance to the development of disciplined, obedient troops. Difficult to define precisely and virtually impossible to measure, the armed forces attempted to increase morale of the ‘will to fight’ through a variety of means, including civil-military religion.⁴⁵

The civil-military leadership style that Bogle highlights with regard to George Washington is evident in how naval leaders are trained and guided as officers. That is clearly evident in textbooks on naval leadership produced by the Navy and distributed to Naval Academy cadets and other naval leaders. It is also evident in many naval leaders in American history. To some extent, Nimitz demonstrated this type of military leadership; however, King did not. He was a great example of contrast to a morally righteous military leader. In fact, he more aptly fits the description of what the army considers a toxic leader.⁴⁶

Religion influences naval leadership today, and it has always played an important role in navy life. In *Naval Leadership*, authors Malcolm E. Wolfe, Frank J. Mulholland, John M. Laudenslager, Horace J. Connery, Bruce McCandless, and Gregory J. Mann provide insight into how senior naval officers guided Naval Academy cadets and other naval officers from 1949 onward.⁴⁷ Of immediate note is the forward written by Admiral Arleigh Burke, (CNO from 1955 to 1961). He set the tenor of this book when he asserted the following:

⁴⁵ Ibid., 18-19.

⁴⁶ The concept of toxic leadership is discussed at the Command and General Staff College, and it is presented at Intermediate Level Education. The following is a citation from Gillian Flynn that the CGSC uses in its Leadership 102 course: “A toxic manager is the manager who bullies, threatens, and yells. The manager whose mode swings determines the climate of the office on any given workday. Who forces employees to whisper in sympathy in cubicles and hallways. The backbiting, belittling boss from hell.” *US Army Command and General Staff College, Intermediate Level Education (ILE), Common Core, L100: Leadership*, “L102: Organized Culture and Climate, Reading E: ‘Toxic Leadership,’ COL George E. Reed,” August, 2007), 99-104.

⁴⁷ Malcolm E. Wolfe, Frank J. Mulholland, John M. Laudenslager, Horace J. Connery, Bruce McCandless, and Gregory J. Mann, *Naval Leadership, Second Edition* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1959).

The bedrock of our national power is the moral strength of our people, the character of our nation, and the ethical values of Americans wherever they may be. In the eyes of the world, wherever the naval officer may go-indeed in the eyes of his own countrymen as well-the officer represents the finest in the manhood of our great nation.⁴⁸

Clearly, Burke, like Halloway, understood that military leaders must demonstrate and live a virtuous and moral life because they are national sentinels of a moral and virtuous America. In a later section of this book, Burke also made the following comments regarding the moral leadership of naval officers:

America's most important role in the world, almost from the day our country was born, has been the role of moral leadership.... Teach our young people to believe in the responsibility of one to another; in their responsibility to God and to the peoples of the world.... The hope of the world has been in our physical power, our moral strength, our integrity, and our will to assume the responsibilities that history plainly intends us to bear.⁴⁹

Wolfe and the other co-authors of this book also state that, "The type of leadership practiced and taught in the Naval Service must always have a moral foundation or it will not survive."⁵⁰ They further add that, "To be able to establish positive discipline within the unit which he commands, the naval leader must exercise moral leadership and must exemplify a personal character above approach.⁵¹ To emphasize the historical importance of religion and morality for American naval leaders, these authors also provide the following excerpt from Article I of the "Rules for the Regulation of the Navy of the United Colonies of North America, 1775,"

The Commanders of all ships and vessels belonging to the thirteen United Colonies are strictly required to show in themselves a good example of honor and virtue to their officers and men, and to be very vigilant in inspecting the behavior of all such under them, and to discountenance and suppress all dissolute, unmoral, and disorderly practices.⁵²

It is evident, from the very beginning of this country, that morality and faith were considered essential leadership traits in naval leaders. These considerations about moral naval leadership

⁴⁸ Ibid., v-vi.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 109.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 110.

⁵¹ Ibid., 110-111.

⁵² Ibid., 112.

were left largely unchanged as far forward as 1948. In fact, in 1948 these considerations were codified in Article 0702A of US Navy Regulations.⁵³ The influence of religion in military leadership evolved a little further in 1951 when then Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall sent the following memorandum to the military departments:

It is in the national interest that personnel serving in the Armed Forces be protected in the realization and development of moral, spiritual, and religious values consistent with the religious beliefs of the individuals concerned. To this end it is the duty of the Commanding Officers in every echelon to develop, to the highest possible degree, the conditions and influences calculated to promote the health, morals, and spiritual values of the personnel under their command.⁵⁴

Wolfe, et al, noted that, “This memorandum was implemented in the Naval Service by directing all Commanding Officers- ‘To Strengthen by every means available, the moral, spiritual, and religious lives of the officers and men of the naval establishment.’”⁵⁵ They also clearly stated that, “Any attempt to separate naval leadership into separate components of moral leadership and military leadership could pose real problems to the line officer who has the main responsibility to command.”⁵⁶ Because of this, it is important to consider and evaluate a person’s faith and how that pertains to his or her job performance and that must be an evaluation of both deeds and rhetoric.

As mentioned earlier, this type of moral leadership was to some extent present in how Nimitz led, but it was noticeably absent in how King led. It seems clear that both men believed in God, but it also seems clear that they had vastly different views about Christianity. King was Episcopalian and although he knew his faith well and could cite passages from the Bible and the *Book of Common Prayers*, he frequently did not follow the teachings of his faith.⁵⁷ In fact, he

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 114.

⁵⁷ The Episcopal Church is the representative of the Anglican Communion in the United States. It has had its own Book of Common Prayer since the American Revolution; prior to that, of course, it was part of the Church of England. There have been four editions of the Episcopal Church's Book of Common

lived in direct contrast to his faith. In his naval leadership capacity, he would invoke his faith in conversation and sometimes in wartime operations orders, but he did not lead by personal example. Instead, he lived his life contrary to the faith in which he believed, and this was evident in how he led and how he conducted himself as an officer. Essentially, King seems to have used his knowledge of the Bible and his faith as a tool to influence others. He was not, however, a practitioner of his faith, a fact which was evident by his deeds and reputation.

Nimitz was raised in the Lutheran faith in a deeply German-American family in Texas, but he became a Unitarian after he met his future wife Catherine, a woman from Massachusetts.⁵⁸ Unlike King, however, Nimitz practiced his faith and that was evident in how he lived his life and

Prayer and each can be found at the following Internet website:
<http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/bcp.htm>.

⁵⁸ Joseph Priestly, *The Doctrines of Heathen Philosophy* (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1987), 3-11. Dr. Priestly was a well-known English theologian and scientist during the mid-eighteenth century. In addition, he was a Presbyterian minister who eventually rejected Calvinist beliefs in favor of Unitarian views. In the introduction of his book, Terrance Allan Hoagwood provides a concise description of Priestly's views and publications. Further, beginning in 1794 with the teachings of Joseph Priestly, Unitarianism has long been established in American theology. At the center of Unitarian beliefs is the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Leo Rosten, *Religions of America: Ferment and Faith in an Age of Crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1975), 99 and 263-273. Rosten states the following, "Unitarians thought that the idea of equating [Jesus] Christ with God was unscriptural, illogical, and unnecessary." However, while they may not believe in Christ as the Savior of Mankind, they do believe in many of his teachings. He also notes that, "they honor the ethical leadership of Jesus without considering him to be their final religious authority." In this sense they consider themselves Christian. In addition to following Jesus' ideas, Rosten also points out, "[Unitarians] rely upon reason and personal understanding, believe in the worth of all human beings, and recognize their responsibility to help create a just and peaceful social order for all peoples." From this perspective, Unitarians believe in helping other members of society lead a morally righteous life so that society will be orderly and peaceful.

One way Unitarians accomplish this is by helping other people understand the practical applications of biblical principles in daily life. For most Unitarians, according to Rosten, "some portions [of the Bible] are distinctly more valuable than others." Rosten adds further that for Unitarians "religion is...more a matter of deeds than creeds." Further, since Unitarians consider the Bible an important source of religious ideology and because many religions use the Bible, Unitarians accept people who follow a wide range of beliefs. This concept is also tied to Thomas Jefferson's views, which he expressed in *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* (a.k.a. *Thomas Jefferson Bible*).

Although Unitarians do not accept Trinitarian concepts, they believe that religious truth cannot be found in any theology, including their own. As a result, they openly accept practitioners of different faiths whether they believe in the Trinity or not. Because each person has to find their own sense of religious truth, they consider a person's religion a private matter. Finally, Rosten notes, "[Unitarians] consider religion a private and personal matter." Based on this perspective, it is also possible for a person to maintain Unitarian beliefs and participate in other religious services.

how he treated others, both in and out of uniform. More importantly, he understood that naval leaders needed to provide civil-military religious guidance to those they led. In addition, he clearly realized that religion helped sailors improve their morale, which subsequently helped sailors stay focused on their duties. This led to disciplined sailors who were more apt to live up to their roles as sentinels of national morality. In short, Nimitz lived his life according to the tenets of his faith and was not hypocritical in his deeds.

The Importance of Religion in King's Leadership Style

By examining King's upbringing and his feelings and attitudes toward his faith, it is possible to see how his religious views modestly, if at all, impacted his leadership style. King was well versed in Christian theology and was noted for his depth of understanding of the Bible. In fact, he frequently cited Biblical passages in discourse with both family and friends. Buell notes that Betsy Matter, the wife of a sailor King had worked with, stated that King "knew the Bible backwards and forwards and could use it to make his point."⁵⁹ Buell also adds that King sometimes used passages from the Book of Common Prayer in wartime operations orders.⁶⁰ Thus, there are de facto instances in which King deliberately included his faith as a facet of his leadership style. However, since he did not live his life by the tenets of his faith, the question really should be why did he incorporate any aspects of his faith while he was at work for the Navy? Perhaps he knew he had to appear to lead from a morally righteous position, or maybe he knew that others revered the Bible and religion, and King therefore used that as a tool for his own advantage. Nonetheless, despite his knowledge of the Bible and his use of his faith in operations orders, it is clear that, with respect to religion, King lived a hypocritical life.

Buell adds further insight into King's faith and notes that both King and his wife were Episcopalians and all of their children were confirmed in the Episcopal Church. Thus, it is clear

⁵⁹ Buell, 305n.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 65n.

that he ensured that his children were raised according to Episcopal beliefs. It is not clear from available research, however, how often King actually attended Episcopal services, either with or without his family. In addition to concerns he had for his family's religious education, King also was surprisingly concerned about his funeral arrangements. He had particular requests for his funeral service and this potentially provides some insight into how he viewed his faith. When King died, his body was displayed at the Washington Cathedral, which is an Episcopal church. Buell notes that the minister officiating read the following simple prayer from the *Book of Common Prayer*, "Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm hath bound by the restless wave." In addition, at his burial site the following music was played: "Onward Christian Soldiers"; "God of our Fathers, whose Almighty hand"; "Lead, Kindly Light"; and "Eternal Father, strong to save."⁶¹ It is not clear why he chose these particular songs or prayers, but for a person with a good understanding of the Bible and the *Book of Common Prayer*, there must have been a strong reason. Perhaps he was asking for salvation from God because he had sinned so often. It is also interesting that he chose the song "Onward Christian Soldiers." Perhaps like Marshall, Eisenhower, and Nimitz, he ultimately viewed his service in the navy, despite his personal weaknesses, as service to Jesus Christ. Whatever his real views were, it is clear from this comment and from his understanding and use of his faith, that religion played some role in his life and undoubtedly had some impact in how he led both in the Navy and with his family.

Despite all of the evidence that religion played on his mind, and that he wanted others to think that this played on his mind, he nonetheless did not practice what he believed and was not a faithful Christian. In addition, he was not tolerant of other faiths. Buell also makes it clear that King did not care much for Roman Catholicism. He points out that, "One of King's daughters was asked to serve as a maid of honor at a Roman Catholic wedding. King said no. 'You'll be

⁶¹ Ibid., 510-11.

blessed with holy water and come back smelling of incense.”⁶² Further, he was known for being a womanizer and for his adulterous behavior. It is clear that he did not value the sacrament of marriage nor did he set the example for his children let alone those that he led. He also had many other vices such as over drinking and excessive gambling. These vices will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. For these reasons, King, despite his competence as a naval officer, cannot be considered a moral leader and should not have had the privilege of leading America’s national sentinels.

The Importance of Religion in Nimitz’s Leadership Style

Nimitz was raised with a strong understanding that religion needed to play a vital role in his life. Like Marshall and Eisenhower, he too was a leader who incorporated civil-military religion in his leadership style. Potter notes that Nimitz was “christened in the Lutheran Church.”⁶³ However, he also adds that Nimitz and his wife were open to differing views on religion. In fact, when their daughter Mary decided to convert to Roman Catholicism, both he and his wife accepted this and actually encouraged their children to make up their own minds about their faith. Potter notes, “Admiral and Mrs. Nimitz, though deeply religious in their own way, were unable to accept the doctrine of any established church, but they respected the religious beliefs of others.”⁶⁴ This is a peculiar analysis by Potter because clearly Nimitz understood and accepted the doctrine of the Lutheran Church, at least until he met his future wife Catherine. Did his wife so completely consume him that he completely abandoned his faith just to marry her? That seems doubtful since the Unitarian faith acknowledges other religions and accepts practitioners of other faiths. Still, it would not be an uncommon occurrence if, due to marriage, an individual converted from one faith to another; however, if that is the case with Nimitz then the

⁶² Ibid., 65, and 65n.

⁶³ Potter, 26.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 456.

available research does not make that clear. Perhaps it is more accurate to deduce that Nimitz accepted the principles of both and agreed more with his wife on those principles that impacted their immediate family. For example, Potter points out that, “They did not have their children baptized because they thus would be making a decision for them, committing them to a set of beliefs and practices, before the children had reached an age at which they could make the choice for themselves.” He further adds that, “They did, however, send the children to Sunday school in order to give them some basis for deciding whether to join a church.”⁶⁵ This is a clear departure from a leader like Marshall who, while serving as Chief of Staff of the Army, had questionnaires created in which he asked Soldiers whether or not they were baptized and, if not, whether or not they would like to be.

Regarding baptism, Potter uncovered a remarkable dialogue between Nimitz and one of his closest friends, Dr. Gilbert Darlington. Dr. Darlington was “a devout clergyman and highly successful financier.” He was also a navy chaplain in the inactive Reserves and was a member of the American Bible Society.⁶⁶ Potter points out that one day Dr. Darlington asked Nimitz to give a speech to the Bible Society, but that Nimitz had reservations about giving a speech to this group. According to Potter, “Nimitz protested that he was not very familiar with the Bible and had scarcely entered a church, except for weddings and funerals. According to Potter, Nimitz also stated to Dr. Darlington, “I don’t know whether I’ve ever been baptized.”⁶⁷ After revealing this, however, Potter notes that Dr. Darlington was able to get Nimitz to admit that “reading the Bible, with its teachings of morality, devotion, and brotherhood, could improve society.”⁶⁸ Dr. Darlington pressed Nimitz to get baptized, but Nimitz refused and told his wife Catherine, “I won’t be baptized.” Potter then indicates that Nimitz tried to research with his family in Texas

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 442.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

whether or not he had ever been baptized. According to Potter, he then told his wife Catherine that if he had to go through with a baptism, that she was going to go through with it too. She refused and said, “I am not going to have anything to do with this.”⁶⁹ Despite his concerns, Nimitz’s family was able to verify that he had indeed been baptized as an infant in the local Lutheran church.

This dialogue is extremely telling about how Nimitz viewed religion and his faith. He admitted the importance and benefits of religion in society, and he was clearly concerned enough about his baptism that he actually tried to research it with his family in Texas. The influence of Nimitz’s wife and her beliefs on him is also equally telling in this dialogue. She was a member of the Unitarian faith and most practitioners of this faith in the United States do not believe in the sacrament of Christian baptism, and that is starkly evident in her comments about baptism. It is thus unclear whether Nimitz disavowed the beliefs in which he was raised or whether he may have still held his beliefs but kept them subdued due to his marriage to a non-Trinitarian. The latter seems more likely since, as previously mentioned, the Unitarian church permits members of other faiths to attend Unitarian services. Also, Nimitz’s views demonstrate at least some acceptance of Thomas Jefferson’s influence on Unitarian principles. Based on available research, it appears that, throughout his life, Thomas Jefferson had a strong interest in understanding his religious beliefs, as well as how religion would impact the United States. In 1803, he corresponded with Joseph Priestly and requested him to “compare the moral doctrine of Jesus with those of the ancient philosophers.”⁷⁰ According to Cyrus Adler, “It was evident that [Jefferson] considered the Gospels as having much extraneous matter and that by careful pruning

⁶⁹ Ibid., 442-43.

⁷⁰ Thomas Jefferson, Andrew A. Lipscomb, ed., and Albert Ellery Bergh, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Volume 20 (Washington, D.C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1905), 13. Also, see aforementioned footnote 58 for information on Joseph Priestly.

there could be selected out these sayings which were absolutely the words of Jesus himself.”⁷¹

Essentially, Jefferson believed that some of the Gospels reflected Jesus’ true thoughts and therefore hidden in the Gospels truly Christian philosophies and moral principles could be found. To assist Priestly, Jefferson provided him with a copy of a bible he had compiled, which reflected elements of the Bible and Gospels he thought were relevant. Priestly accepted the task and worked with Theophilus Lindsey to incorporate these hidden philosophies and moral principles into Unitarian principles.⁷² Thus, Nimitz’s opinions and deeds reflect that he understood and practiced the Unitarian principles.

In April 1913, Chester and Catherine Nimitz were married at the home of a friend in Wollaston, Massachusetts. The ceremony was conducted by a Unitarian minister and none of Chester’s family was present.⁷³ This is strange because clearly his family was familiar with this part of the country, since Nimitz’s step-father attended college near Boston. Thus, one of the following likely true: he did not want his family to attend and purposely did not invite them; he invited them to the wedding and they en masse did not come because they disapproved of the wedding; or he invited them and they approved but did not want to make the long trip from Texas to Boston. The latter seems more likely because when he finally brought his new bride to Texas to introduce her to his family, she was not warmly received and his family even spoke in German

⁷¹ Ibid., 12. Also, Cyrus Adler wrote the introduction to the *Jefferson Bible*, and he was a librarian for the Smithsonian Institute.

⁷² The following was taken from Wikipedia regarding the connection between Priestley and Lindsey: When Priestley's friend Theophilus Lindsey, decided to found a new Christian denomination that would not restrict its members' beliefs, Priestley and others hurried to his aid. On 17 April 1774, Lindsey held the first Unitarian service in Britain; he had even designed his own liturgy, of which many were critical. Priestley defended his friend in the pamphlet *Letter to a Layman, on the Subject of the Rev. Mr. Lindsey's Proposal for a Reformed English Church* (1774), claiming that only the form of worship had been altered, not its substance, and attacking those who followed religion as a fashion. Priestley attended Lindsey's church regularly in the 1770s and occasionally preached there. He continued to support institutionalized Unitarianism for the rest of his life, writing several *Defenses* of Unitarianism and encouraging the foundation of new Unitarian chapels throughout Britain and the United States (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Priestley).

⁷³ Ibid., 119-20.

in front of her so that she would not understand their conversation. Whatever the differences they may have had with her initially, Nimitz's family eventually did warm to her.

Despite a nontraditional beginning, Nimitz and his wife had a long and enjoyable life together. Nimitz' biographer Oliver Warner notes that Nimitz and Catherine "had four children, a boy and three girls," and that "Catherine was a lady of great charm who shared her husband's love of sport and classical music, and who was of the greatest help to him in his career."⁷⁴ During World War II, when Nimitz was in command of the Pacific Fleet, he almost daily corresponded with his wife. She was his sounding board on all matters in which he was engaged. Puryear notes, "As the war developed, he shared many of his thoughts with Mrs. Nimitz in his correspondence, particularly his own personal issues as well as navy personnel matters. His letters to her were as important as hers to him because he could tell her things he could tell no other person."⁷⁵ This type of relationship closely matches the relationship both Marshall and Eisenhower had with their wives, but as the monograph will highlight, this was not the type of relationship King had with his wife.

⁷⁴ Oliver Warner, *Command at Sea: Great Fighting Admirals from Hawke to Nimitz* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 190.

⁷⁵ Puryear, *American Admiralship*, 565.

Leadership Styles

The military leadership styles of these two naval officers are contrasting in several ways. King was an immoral, self-serving leader who was notably brutal to his subordinates and abrasive with Allied military leaders and politicians alike. Nimitz, however, was a moral leader who served his country selflessly, and he was engaging and supportive of his staff as well as sister service members and Allied military leaders and politicians. Really, both men serve as dissimilar examples of naval leadership during World War II and Nimitz's style more closely aligns with the leadership styles of Marshall and Eisenhower than it does with King.

Careful consideration of how these men led others will provide contemporary military leaders a better perspective from which to guide their troops and the future of the navy. King's leadership style serves as an example of what not to do and Nimitz's leadership style serves as an example of what to do. Both men spoke frankly and were scrupulous thinkers and practitioners of their craft, but Nimitz was a leader and example for other sailors to follow, while King was more of an immoral technician and practitioner of naval ideas than a real leader.

King's Military Leadership Style

King was a competent naval officer who was successively placed in leadership positions and those that worked with him and for him, whether they liked him or not, immediately recognized he was in a position of authority and was not afraid to inflict his will on others. In, *Slide Rules and Submarines*, General Montgomery C. Meigs notes that, "King brought great operational experience, a powerful mind, and an eccentric and unbending personality."⁷⁶ Meigs also highlights that "King was a brilliant naval officer and exceptionally capable seaman. But he had a willful, mean, and brittle side to his nature that limited his effectiveness as a leader charged with bringing new people and new ideas to bear on problems of developing untraditional and

⁷⁶ General Montgomery C. Meigs, *Slide Rules and Submarines* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1990), 44.

unanticipated ways of waging warfare.”⁷⁷ Most sailors that worked with him seemed to consider him a mean spirited and cold leader, yet technically competent in his position. Potter notes that,

King had earned a reputation for brilliance and toughness, not to say harshness. He was generally reputed to be cold, aloof, and humorless.... He was utterly intolerant of stupidity, inefficiency, and laziness. He hated dishonesty and pretension, despised yes-men, and had no patience with indecisive Hamlet types. He could be completely ruthless.⁷⁸

Another King biographer, Kenneth J. Hagan, notes that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt appointed King to replace Admiral Stark (based on Stark’s recommendation) after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He also adds that King was “little liked but universally respected for his high intelligence, fiery temperament, and quick decisions.” Hagan further adds that King was “an officer of broad naval experience...equally familiar with the elements of surface and aerial warfare.”⁷⁹ The belief that King was well versed in naval surface and aerial warfare and that he was technically competent in the use of naval warfare is widely accepted by authors assessing King as a naval leader and is not in question in this monograph. What is examined in this monograph is King’s leadership abilities absent his technical naval skills. This analysis will demonstrate that King was perceived as a toxic leader who was known to be petulant, overly emotional, stubborn, egotistical, and immoral. These leadership traits, more than anything else define King, and these negative traits affected how he engaged those he led, US and Allied leaders, and even his own family.

When he worked with subordinates, King wanted to be viewed as strict but fair. Buell notes that this was how one of King’s chief petty officers frankly analyzed and described King’s leadership style.⁸⁰ This assessment is much better than most sailors gave of King’s leadership style. Meigs notes that King “dismissed subordinates coldly. ...He was not a leader who

⁷⁷ Ibid., 44-6.

⁷⁸ Potter, 31.

⁷⁹ Hagan, 307.

⁸⁰ Buell, 22.

encouraged subordinates who had new ideas.⁸¹ In *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century*, Mark A. Stoler highlights that King was “opinionated, short-tempered, highly irascible, and rude.” He also notes that King’s supposed motto was the following: “When the going gets rough they call on the sons of bitches.”⁸² In short, it was obvious that he was not a charismatic leader who inspired people, and it seems clear that he knew this. Still, King wanted those he led to like him, and he worked at it by trying to carouse with them after hours. At the same time, he wanted them to respect his abilities and to follow his lead. Buell adds to this discussion when he notes that, “King admired those officers who could talk in the sailor’s vernacular without loss of dignity.”⁸³ King never achieved this because, in order to be perceived as this type of leader, those that you lead have to revere and respect you as a competent and moral leader who is fair and balanced in decisions.

Despite his efforts to win over subordinates, he did not mind overworking his staff. When he was a flag officer, King preferred a small staff of eleven officers who were skilled and competent. He believed that this was the most efficient way to conduct naval planning and the right way to best utilize manpower.⁸⁴ Smaller staffs, however, mean greater work for less people, and that is true as much today as it was then. Buell notes that staffers for King worked long hours and frequently on weekends, knew what King expected of them, but always received few comments for or against a submitted plan. In short, King was a difficult leader to develop plans for. He was extremely general and vague in his initial guidance, and the staff therefore had to try and figure out what he really wanted. Buell notes that even after numerous drafts, if King did not like a plan he would rip it up in front of the officer presenting it and write it himself on the spot.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Meigs, 44-6.

⁸² Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 116-117.

⁸³ Buell, 21.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 129.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 130.

This was again clear during maneuvers in 1941, when Admiral King, as Buell notes, “failed to allow his subordinates to use their initiative. He still wanted to do everything.”⁸⁶ Meigs adds that King “believed strongly that he alone knew what was best.” Meigs further highlights that when King was “wrong or confronted with a challenging view, King proved totally unreceptive to the ideas of others.”⁸⁷

Part of King’s demeanor may be traced to military leaders he viewed as successful leaders. He admired Mahan immensely but as Buell noted, he most admired Napoleon and how he controlled his subordinates. He also pointed out that King recognized the difficulty some of Napoleon’s marshals had when they used their own initiative instead of following Napoleon’s sage guidance. According to Buell, King reflected at the mistakes of Napoleon’s marshals and stated, “They got messed up.”⁸⁸ The point to draw from this is that King was a micromanaging leader on purpose because he considered this a valuable aspect of Napoleon’s leadership. How he developed and engaged with his staff clearly shows that he wanted to lead as Napoleon had done with his marshals. This historical example provides some insight into King’s paranoia and lack of confidence in those he led. Also, it is indicative of the fact that he could not inspire nor train those he led in such a way that he could feel confident that they would carry out his orders as he wanted them carried out. In addition, it seems that he did not have confidence in those he led, and this was likely because he knew they did not like or respect him and he probably feared some sort of sabotage to his efforts. This may in part explain why King micromanaged Nimitz during the war. Buell notes that King “never entirely trusted Nimitz’s judgment.” He adds that, “In King’s mind, Nimitz took bad advice and was too willing to compromise with the Army in the interests of harmony.” Buell also adds that “King’s frequent trips to see Nimitz indicate the extent of King’s

⁸⁶ Ibid., 131.

⁸⁷ Meigs, 44.

⁸⁸ Buell, 35.

anxiety to keep Nimitz under his thumb.”⁸⁹ In short, he seemed to be aware of the effect of his toxic leadership but this awareness did not alter his leadership style.

In addition to the lack of confidence King had in those he led, Buell adds that, “Although he would never admit it, King cared how people felt about him.”⁹⁰ It is bizarre and tellingly egotistical that King felt comfortable micromanaging and overworking those that he led and at the same time he really seemed to believe that those he led would eventually come to like and admire him. Perhaps he thought that those he led should be appreciative of his stern paternalistic and hypocritical leadership, which he thought benevolently guide them along.

To compensate for his poor leadership abilities, early in his career he tried to be a part of many extra-curricular activities with both officer and enlisted sailors. Buell notes that, “he was often late to formations...love[d] parties, gambling, drinking, dancing, and the pursuit of women.” This type of behavior was dangerous to any officer’s career then and it is still dangerous today. King’s efforts to be accepted by his peers and those that he led sometimes made him the life of the party, but they also frequently got him into trouble with his superiors. Buell notes that, “In addition to drinking, King’s tempestuous behavior repeatedly provoked his senior officers. What King regarded as forthrightness they regarded as stubbornness, belligerence, and arrogant insubordination.”⁹¹ As a result, as Buell also points out, King was frequently confined to his quarters for his inappropriate behavior as a naval officer. He also adds that King’s inappropriate and unprofessional behavior and the reprimands and discipline received were frequently included in his Fitness Reports. Buell provides a great example of this with his discussion about the time when King was conning the *USS Lexington* during exercises off the California coast. Simply put, King disregarded orders. When called into the ranking flag officer’s office the next day, Buell notes that, “King resorted to his sea-lawyer tactics,” rather than admitting that he had willfully

⁸⁹ Ibid., 361.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁹¹ Ibid., 22-25.

disregarded orders. After the flag officer finished yelling at King, which was the same moment that King realized the significance of the situation he found himself in, he stopped trying to be a lawyer and as Buell notes, “King apologized and promised it would not happen again.”⁹² There are numerous stories like this about King’s litigious arguments with his superiors over infractions he committed, some significant and typically career ending and some petty and minor. Yet, despite his poor leadership skills and his glaring acts of insubordination, King kept moving along in his naval career and opportunities just seemed to fall in his lap.

It is important to reflect on King’s acts of insubordination for a moment because King was very intolerant of subordinates for the very behavior he displayed to his superiors. He thus led in a hypocritical fashion and those that worked with him knew it. To his subordinates, Buell notes the following about King, “Praise was given grudgingly and then only in private. Censure was swift, devastating, and before a cloud of witnesses. ‘The object of his wrath was unlikely to forget the occasion...nor would anyone else within earshot.’”⁹³ Perhaps the most telling example of his hypocrisy can be gleaned from what he typically told sailors just before they took an enlistment oath. Buell provides the following comments from King:

After you have taken the oath, you must understand that you will have to do what you are told to do whether you like it or not-and to go where you will be sent whether you like it or not-and to work at whatever you are given to do.⁹⁴

It is curious that King felt a need to reinforce this otherwise obvious comment about service in the military. It is equally hypocritical of him to make such a statement to enlisted sailors when he himself was numerous times guilty of not following his own guidance. King’s double standard leadership style was also evident in how he conducted himself after hours with both officer and enlisted service members.

⁹² Ibid., 88.

⁹³ Ibid., 91.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 93.

As mentioned earlier, King enjoyed attending parties whether being conducted by officers or enlisted. Buell notes that King sought entertainment and once stated, “I like parties, lots of them.” Buell added that parties for King were, “his way of relaxing, of relieving the tension created by the responsibility of command. The longer King had to remain at sea between parties, the more disagreeable he became.”⁹⁵ Even as a flag officer, King still partied, drank, and fraternized excessively. Buell notes, that King “devised a devastating cocktail which he called ‘The King’s Peg,’ a combination of brandy and champagne which he mixed himself and poured into tall glasses over a small amount of ice.”⁹⁶ A member of the military getting drunk is not particularly out of the ordinary, but it is out of the ordinary when the serviceman getting drunk is a flag officer and he is getting drunk during a time in the United States when there was a prohibition against alcohol.⁹⁷ It is also an exercise in poor judgment for an officer to fraternize with enlisted service members to such an extent that the officer conducts himself in an unbecoming manner. In one instance in 1940 while traveling with Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, King got drunk and embarrassed the whole entourage when they stopped to inspect the Key West Naval Station. Buell adds that the commanding officer of the station stated, “Admiral King embarrassed all of us with his intoxicated behavior.”⁹⁸ In short, he openly fraternized with sailors and frequently engaged in conduct unbecoming of an officer; notably, getting drunk and engaging in lecherous acts.

In another instances, Buell points out that when King was in command of the *USS Lexington* (1930-31), he “invited some junior officers to join him in his gig. They ended up at a

⁹⁵ Ibid., 89.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 128.

⁹⁷ The following was taken from Wikipedia at the following address (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prohibition_in_the_United_States): In the United States, the term Prohibition refers to the period from 1920 to 1933, during which the sale, manufacture, and transportation of alcohol for consumption were banned nationally as mandated in the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The 18th Amendment was certified as ratified on January 29, 1919, having been approved by 36 states, and went into effect on a Federal level on January 29, 1920. However, the Eighteenth Amendment was repealed with ratification of the Twenty-first Amendment on December 5, 1933.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 128.

party, and soon King pulled a hip flask from his back pocket and poured drinks... ‘This word soon got around,’ said one of the young officers.”⁹⁹ There is a lot to be gleaned about King’s leadership style in this single vignette. Because the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution enacted prohibition, he knew that there was a federal law against obtaining alcohol, and yet he did so anyway.¹⁰⁰ Further, he not only broke the law, but he intentionally pulled his junior officers into breaking the law with him. In effect, he wanted to be seen as one of them. Buell adds that, “Ashore he was one of the boys and was nicknamed, ‘Uncle Ernie.’”¹⁰¹ For the Navy, this type of behavior by a senior officer was then and still is today a serious threat to the good order and discipline required of sailors aboard naval vessels.

Fundamentally, King seemed to accept breaking laws and regulations, so long as a sailor was able to perform his job and fulfill his duty while aboard ship. This is the profile of a leader who is not moral, who is technically focused, who is not concerned about those he leads, and who would not serve as a national sentinel for Americans to admire and have faith in. Instead, King fit the profile of a leader who had weak morals, fraternized with those he lead, and was hypocritical in his behavior. A clear example of his hypocrisy is evident when in 1927 as a captain he attended flight school. Buell points out that King “went on the wagon, preached abstention for all students, and badgered the base commander to enforce the prohibition laws.”¹⁰² This is remarkable because he partied and drank while at this school. Buell notes that when King discovered a routinely

⁹⁹ Ibid., 89.

¹⁰⁰ The following summary of the 18th Amendment to the US Constitutional was taken from *The US Constitution Online* (<http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html#Am1>):

Amendment 18 - Liquor Abolished (ratified on January 16, 1919 and repealed by Amendment 21, which was ratified on December 5, 1933). “After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.”

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 92.

¹⁰² Ibid., 74.

occurring officers drinking club, he eagerly joined. Buell cites one of the club members as saying, “Ernie...was the damnest party man in the place.”¹⁰³

In addition to drinking and partying to excess with officers and enlisted sailors, King also had a seemingly insatiable desire for women. He was well known for his many adulterous affairs. Buell points out that King spent most of his afternoons and weekends with women, most of whom were the wives of sailors who were out at sea.¹⁰⁴ He often seduced these women with letters expressing his love to them. Buell also notes that,

King’s interest in women was common knowledge aboard the *Lexington*. Sometimes it was innocent, as when he danced and socialized with officer’s wives.... But King could also become downright lecherous. Women avoided sitting near him at dinner parties because his hands were too often beneath the table.¹⁰⁵

In addition to his lecherous exploits while away from his family, Buell provides examples of King’s lecherous behavior when he was home on shore leave. He points out that when King was not at sea, he would sometimes stay at a friend’s farm in Maryland. He also stayed with Paul and Charlotte Pihl in northern Virginia. These were friends of the Kings and Paul was a senior naval officer and engineer who worked for King during one of his commands. The Pihs and King (without his wife Mattie) would frequently attend parties together. He also notes that Charlotte was very interested in King, his career, and his ideas.¹⁰⁶ Buell also notes that when Paul was away, King would visit the farm and spent much of the time with Charlotte. It is not clear whether or not King engineered Paul to be away when he was on shore leave, but the circumstantial evidence is clear that this likely occurred. Amazingly, Mattie would frequently call the farm and ask Charlotte if her husband was there with her. Buell points out that, after Charlotte would confirm this, Mattie would then ask her not to let him know that she had called.¹⁰⁷ It is simply

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 302-308.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 89.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 305-306.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 308.

remarkable that King so hated being with his wife and family that when on shore leave he would rather engage in lecherous behavior with the wives of fellow naval officers than be with his family. This bespeaks the behavior of a morally bankrupt man only interested in satisfying his basic human needs. Further, people who demonstrate this type of socially deviant behavior should not be allowed to serve in America's armed forces let alone have the responsibility of leading others. The very presence of this type of behavior should have brought resounding career ending condemnations from King's superiors. Clearly, King did not lead as a national sentinel for his country. Instead, he typified the dangers our country faces when corrupt, immoral, and toxic leaders are placed into positions of power.

Because the evidence seems to indicate that King always seemed to be searching for a woman with whom to have an affair, he was obviously tolerant of women in uniform and actually welcomed them aboard. In one instance, Buell notes that King invited a woman who was his female aide during World War I to his office. He noticed that she was not wearing a World War I ribbon. He then reached in his desk, pulled out this ribbon and pinned it on her coat and according to Buell stated, "You're doing a good job now." He then kissed her on both cheeks, shook her hand and sent her on her way.¹⁰⁸ Why Buell mentioned this story about King is entirely unclear; in fact, it raises more questions about King's views. For example, why did he invite her to his office? Why did he happen to have a World War I ribbon in his desk? It was surprisingly convenient for King to be sure. In addition, why did he kiss her on both cheeks after pinning the medal on her? Would he have done that to a male sailor receiving the same award? The whole story seems contrived, and if it actually occurred it seems as though it was done with the intent to make King seem supportive of women in the Navy. Such a position or at least the perception of this position may have been politically wise King. In his *First Official Report*, which he

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 341.

submitted to the Secretary of the Navy on March 1st, 1944, he made the following supportive comments about the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES):

The organization has been a success from the beginning, partly because of the high standards Waves had to meet to be accepted, partly because no effort has been spared to see that they are properly looked out for, and partly because of their overpowering desire to make good. ...it is a pleasure to report that in addition to their having earned an excellent reputation as part of the Navy, they have become an inspiration to all hands in uniform.¹⁰⁹

However, based on King's notoriety for adultery, and how he handled the aforementioned award ceremony, it can only be assumed that he simply saw women serving in the navy as potential women to seduce and bed.

In addition to his apparent attitude toward women in uniform, there is also sufficient evidence to indicate that King was a racist. He told racist jokes about blacks and turned a blind eye so-to-speak to racism, whether done institutionally or between sailors. Buell highlights that, "King's behavior toward blacks...was inexcusably racist and unjust.... He did not aggressively enforce racial discrimination; he passively allowed it to persist."¹¹⁰ Despite his racist leanings, it nonetheless appears as though, according to Buell, King was not opposed to blacks serving in the Navy so long as they were only in menial positions.¹¹¹ It is unclear why King may have held racist views towards black service members, but in fairness to King, this type of racial discrimination and job bias against black service members was part and parcel for the time and in that light King's behavior would have realistically been more typical than atypical. Nonetheless, as a key military leader he could have made important cultural changes in the Navy that would have improved the lives of so many disaffected black sailors. However, he failed to help those in most need of his leadership.

¹⁰⁹ Walter Millis, ed., *The War Reports of General of the Army George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, General of the Army H. H. Arnold, Commanding General, Army Air Corps, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1947), 506.

¹¹⁰ Buell, 346.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 343.

In addition to his failings with women and blacks in the military, King was petty in how he responded to those that he thought had slighted him. Of particular merit worth mentioning is how he dealt with Captain Joseph J. Rochefort, the naval officer who had a tremendous role in breaking Japanese secret codes during the war. In 1942, Rochefort and his team (also known as Station Hypo) were able to break the Japanese code and this enabled them to discover that the Japanese were planning an attack on Midway. Rochefort used this intelligence to brief Nimitz who accepted it as credible and planned to ambush the Japanese fleet at Midway and defeat them in a Mahan-style decisive battle. Contrary to Rochefort's analysis of Japanese transmissions, however, a competing naval intelligence office in Washington, D.C. (OP-20-G) had a different analysis of future Japanese war plans. That office briefed King that the Japanese were likely going to attack the west coast of the US and the Alaskan Aleutian Islands. Based on this, King highly recommended that Nimitz defend the Aleutians and the west coast of the US and forgo his Midway plans. Nimitz stuck with his plan and defeated the Japanese at Midway, and it appears that King may have felt slighted or outperformed by Nimitz. As Potter notes, Nimitz recommended that Rochefort receive the Distinguished Service Medal for his contributions to the Battle of Midway; however, King, acting as the approving authority, rejected the recommendation for no good reason.¹¹² Ultimately, Rochefort received the award, but he received it posthumously. In fact, not too long after this rebuff, King had Rochefort transferred to a significantly lesser job in Washington, D.C., despite Nimitz's pleas not to do so.¹¹³ It is astounding that King transferred arguably the most significant intelligence officer Nimitz had at his headquarters and all because Rochefort was a little eccentric and outperformed the intelligence community that was pushing information to King. In essence, King took a real asset away from Nimitz during the war so that he could get credible intelligence first and thus direct Nimitz from afar.

¹¹² Potter, 104.

¹¹³ Ibid., 211, 231.

Despite the numerous documented instances of King's poor naval leadership, he still managed to achieve the rank of fleet admiral and the position of Chief of Naval Operations. He engaged in socially deviant behavior, questioned and challenged those superior to him by rank or position, and was a hypocritical leader who irritated servicemen, both officers and enlisted and politicians both foreign and domestic. Considering the real concern that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had for political acumen and his real love of the Navy, it is amazing that he would have ever agreed to put King in such a vaunted and influential post. Nonetheless, he did and King's toxic leadership as well as his other poor leadership traits impacted naval support during World War II, most obviously during the Battle of the Atlantic (1939-1945). In fact, his blunt demeanor and obvious personal animosity toward the British often created a rift between the key leaders of the two navies and arguably resulted in less support in the Atlantic and a time when it was most needed.

During the early phases of this battle (notably 1941-43), German U-boats freely operated in the Atlantic and had little difficulty sinking US ships. World War II historians Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett note that, "the U-boat offensive against U.S. Western Hemisphere shipping, dubbed Operation Drumbeat, met a completely unprepared opponent." They add that, "Despite having the benefit of British experiences, the U.S. Navy acted as if the Battle of the Atlantic had no relevance to the protection of the shipping in the Caribbean and along the Atlantic coast of the United States."¹¹⁴ The British experiences that Murray and Millett mention include Britain's decoded German naval communications. In short, from the summer of 1940 onward (with considerations acknowledged regarding communication interruptions due to periodic code changes by the Germans) the Allies had a good idea where German U-boats were operating in the Atlantic. With this intelligence, it is unclear why King did not put all his efforts toward finding, fixing, fighting, and finishing German U-boats, especially since trade and support for the Allies

¹¹⁴ Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War To Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 249-50.

(notably the British) depended on open and unmolested sea routes between the US and Europe. The only possible explanation was that following World War I, he and most other naval officers had trained for an eventual naval fight with Japan, which was codenamed Operation Orange. In, *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940*, Henry G. Gole highlights the following about Operation Orange, “The U.S. Navy saw its mission as providing America’s first line of defense and had no doubt about its purpose: it would sooner or later fight Japan. Officers at the Naval War College annually war-gamed Orange, war with Japan.”¹¹⁵ Also, according to Ronald H Spector in *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, “At the Naval War College, a generation of officers debated, tested, and refined, war with Orange. One hundred twenty-seven times...the American fleet crossed the Pacific to do battle with its Japanese opponent.”¹¹⁶ Gole also notes, however, that for military planners, “A two-ocean war was considered early on, as was consideration of the need to defeat Germany first in a war with Germany and Japan.”¹¹⁷ Regardless of the reason, King acted slowly in the Atlantic despite the fact that President Roosevelt made it clear to everyone that, following the Arcadia Conference in December 1941, the US was pursuing a Europe first strategy. Stoler makes the following prescient comment about King’s reluctance to support a Europe-first (i.e. Atlantic-first) strategy:

His naval forces were taking a terrible beating in the Pacific, and throughout February and March he had been bombarding the War Department and the White House with requests for reinforcements and a virtual Pacific-first-strategy. Static defense was impossible, he argued, and the United States could not allow the ‘white man’s countries’ of Australia and New Zealand to be overrun by Japan ‘because of the repercussions among the non-white races of the world.’¹¹⁸

The psychological effect of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, no doubt had a significant impact in how King prioritized support for the navy. However, the position in

¹¹⁵ Henry G. Gole, *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 11.

¹¹⁶ Ronald H Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 57.

¹¹⁷ Gole, xix.

¹¹⁸ Stoler, 96.

which he served was the highest naval military strategic position a sailor could serve and in this position he needed to always be concerned about the big global strategic initiative for the navy as well as what the president directed. King's insistence on the a Pacific-first strategy was contrary what he was taught at the Navy War College with regard to fighting both Germany and Japan at the same time, and it was contrary to what the president, Marshall, Eisenhower, General Henry H. (Hap) Arnold, Henry L. Stimson, and Harry H. Hopkins wanted. Thus, his interest in a Pacific-first strategy seemed to be based more on irrational reasoning than sound military planning analysis. Murray and Millett point out that, "It was Admiral King at his worst; he was simply not going to learn anything from the British, whatever the costs." King's failure to follow the strategic objectives of the president simply because he did not want to rely on British help is astounding. Murray and Millett note that, "For the U-boats, Operation Drumbeat became a second 'happy time.' While Donitz's boats slaughtered merchant ship after merchant ship, the U.S. Navy failed to sink a single U-boat until April 1942."¹¹⁹ Murray and Millett highlight that for the first quarter of 1942, German U-boats sank 216 US ships of 1,240,750 tons, and still King did nothing despite repeated requests by the British to establish convoys. In fact, the British sent Commander Roger Winn, the head of the operational intelligence center, to speak with King about getting immediate convoy escorts, which they had already demonstrated as an effective countermeasure to German U-boats.¹²⁰ King's Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral R. E. Edwards, not King, met with Winn and made the following comment (but voiced King's opinion nonetheless), "The Americans wished to learn their own lessons and that they had plenty of ships with which to do so."¹²¹ This is an interesting comment because it is apparent from King's *Third Official Report* to the Secretary of the Navy on December 8th, 1945, that he acknowledged that the convoy escorts in the Atlantic were crucial to Allied success in Europe. King made the following point in this

¹¹⁹ Murray and Millett, 250.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

report, “The Navy’s antisubmarine campaign with the British-United States integrated convoy system was in great part responsible for the vital shipping necessary for the Allied land offensive which broke into the Fortress of Europe in 1944 and overwhelmed the Germans ashore in 1945.”¹²² This is after the fact of course, but considering the lives and material lost and how those could have impacted the war, King’s failure to act aggressively in the Atlantic was unfathomable, incredibly petty and narrow minded, and arguably criminal in nature.

Further, King’s reluctance to learn from British naval mistakes in the Atlantic and to apply those lessons to the navy’s military strategy in the Atlantic is unbelievable. The comments from his chief of staff echo a mindset by King and his staff that the American navy did not need help or friendly advice from British naval officers. This Anglophobic mentality during World War II might be expected from uneducated and untrained sailors, but not from a senior and seasoned naval flag officer, who essentially was the military head of naval operations. In his interactions with Allies, King was in sharp contrast to Eisenhower and Marshall, both of whom were much more sanguine, politically aware, and aptly chosen for the positions they held. King’s type of military leadership is beyond parochial and, as previously stated, considering the lives and material that were lost while he was deducing what the British had been telling him all along (that convoys were essential in the Atlantic), his behavior was more an example of criminal negligence and should have been prosecuted as such.

Nimitz’s Military Leadership Style

Nimitz was a leader more akin to Eisenhower and perhaps even to some degree Marshall. In fact, Puryear notes that, “Nimitz possessed leadership qualities equal to Eisenhower’s.”¹²³ This is a salient comparison and the evidence is present to suggest that Nimitz had a leadership style similar to Eisenhower’s. For example, much like Eisenhower, Nimitz believed that he truly

¹²² Millis, 694.

¹²³ Puryear, 53.

needed to lead out of a national interest vice his own personal gratification and career enhancement. According to Puryear, Nimitz believed that, “The interests of the nation transcend private interests.”¹²⁴ Further, in his Master’s thesis “Willower: A Historical Study of an Influential Leadership Attribute,” Navy Lieutenant Commander David G. Schappert made this astute and arguably accurate assessment of Nimitz’s leadership style, “In his day-to-day life, Nimitz proved that the best way to get someone’s attention is to lower your voice. Nimitz’s method of willpower transmission was through quiet unassuming confidence and honest hard work, not vainglorious exclamation nor thunderous exhortation.”¹²⁵ Spector also notes that Nimitz “had the reputation of being able to do much with little.” He further highlights that Nimitz was “soft-spoken and relaxed, a team player, a leader by example rather than exhortation.”¹²⁶ In addition, by providing comments taken from interviews with Nimitz’s family, Puryear provides insightful comments about how Nimitz was as a naval leader and as a father. Nimitz’s son, Chester, stated, “Dad had probably the most highly developed sense of duty, as a public servant, and devoted himself first, foremost and always to that aspect of his life, and perhaps secondly to his wife.”¹²⁷

In addition to his philosophical beliefs regarding his service to the US, he also was similar to Eisenhower in that he really wanted to connect with those that he led. Puryear adds that, “Nimitz’s success as a leader was to some degree attributable to his concern and consideration for his subordinates; perhaps nothing expressed that better than his knowing their names.”¹²⁸ Potter notes that this was not by accident and pointed out, “Nimitz had a well earned reputation for never forgetting a name or face and for never failing to send cards or letters to his

¹²⁴ Ibid., 566.

¹²⁵ LCDR David G. Schappert, “Willpower: A Historical Study of an Influential Leadership Attribute.” Masters of Military Arts and Sciences Theses, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2003, 36.

¹²⁶ Spector, 146.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 567.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 236.

friends congratulating them on birthdays, anniversaries, and promotions.” He also adds that, “Nimitz maintained a card file containing those important dates that he was credited with carrying in his head. At each station or command, some secretary, yeoman, or aide became the custodian of this file, with collateral duty of keeping Nimitz posted on the dates and also on published notices of promotions or other honors that came to those listed on the cards.”¹²⁹

In addition to his personable and engaging leadership style with those he led, Puryear notes that, “Nimitz also spent a considerable amount of his time connecting with his people.”¹³⁰ Like Eisenhower, he would crawl into battle positions and splash through damaged ships taking on water just so that he could get a good feeling for how things were going for the sailors under his command. Nimitz understood the importance of connecting with people, especially the sailors he commanded. Potter notes that Nimitz once said, “Some of the best help and advice I’ve had comes from junior officers and enlisted men.”¹³¹ He also notes that Nimitz frequently met with his men to give “assurances that the big boss was interested in everyone and was their active partner,” and to give Nimitz “a feel for the operational front which he found invaluable.”¹³² Nimitz’s interest in relating to and understanding the issues confronting those that he led is a stark difference between his and King’s leadership styles. This was evident in how Nimitz dealt with the Pacific Fleet staff after he assumed command following the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. Potter notes that rather than firing them outright, Nimitz said “he had complete and unlimited confidence in every one of them and that he did not blame them for what had happened.”¹³³ With this renewed sense of confidence, the staff was able to get moving on vital issues confronting the fleet. This was contrary, however, to what King told him to do. As Spector points out King told

¹²⁹ Potter, 167.

¹³⁰ Puryear, 53.

¹³¹ Potter, 223.

¹³² Ibid., 55.

¹³³ Ibid., 21.

Nimitz to “rid Pearl Harbor of pessimists and defeatists.”¹³⁴ Collectively, this analysis demonstrates that Nimitz had a leadership style, which was remarkably similar to both Marshall and Eisenhower, but starkly different from King.

In addition to being very personable with those he led, Nimitz was also demanding of his staff, and he therefore carefully scrutinized an officer to serve on his staff. Puryear notes that, “He believed in regularly reinvigorating his staff with officers fresh from combat and wanted to give his own staff a variety of experiences, particularly sea duty and combat.¹³⁵ In addition, during planning meetings, Potter points out that Nimitz “acted like a chairman of the board, guiding and being guided by others.... [He] made the final decisions, sometimes despite contrary advice, but first he heard the advice and weighed it carefully.”¹³⁶ According to Schappert, Admiral Raymond Spruance compared Nimitz’s leadership style with the previous commander and stated, “It was like being in a stuffy room and having someone open a window and let in a breath of fresh air.”¹³⁷ Essentially, Nimitz listened to his staff officers debate plans and operations, interjected when necessary, and then guided the discourse. Ultimately, however, he made the final decision in any discussion. Warner makes this clear when he notes how Nimitz responded to some of his key subordinate commanders who were trying to dissuade him from attacking the Kwajalein atoll in January 1944, “Nimitz heard them out patiently and then said, ‘Sitting behind desks in the United States are able officers who would give their right arms to be out here fighting the war. If you gentlemen can’t bring yourselves to carry out my orders, I can arrange an exchange of duty...make up your minds. You have five minutes.’”¹³⁸ Comments like this from Nimitz make it clear that he listened to his subordinates, but when he had made his decision, then that was it and his orders were going to be followed.

¹³⁴ Spector, 147.

¹³⁵ Puryear, 566.

¹³⁶ Potter, 56.

¹³⁷ Schappert, 39.

¹³⁸ Warner, 199.

In addition, there are a few examples most notably at the beginning of World War II, in which Nimitz tried to micro-manage some of his subordinate commanders. In a striking example of this Potter notes that, “Nimitz, who had never piloted a plane, commanded a carrier, or fought an engagement, was telling Admiral Halsey, the navy’s senior carrier commander, how to fight his battles.¹³⁹” Potter notes that Halsey “diplomatically ignored the message,” and that Nimitz “got the point.”¹⁴⁰ While both King and Nimitz have clear examples of micromanaging their staffs, it is evident that unlike King, Nimitz realized that this type of leadership style is counterproductive because it demonstrated a lack of trust and confidence in subordinates and also implied a lack of leadership on his part. As a result, Nimitz stopped doing this and in the process learned a valuable lesson. Comparatively, King was aware that he was micro-managing his staff, but continued to do this throughout his career.

Aside from this difference between these two leaders, both had differing views on women serving in the Navy. While King liked the idea of women in the Navy for previously mentioned reasons, Nimitz did not like the idea. Instead, he seems to have viewed women in an almost Victorian manner. Potter notes that when Nimitz was in Washington, D.C., he worked out of the Navy Department and had WAVES and Women Marines working for him. He also notes that these women were hand-picked by the Marines for their attractiveness and, of course, their efficiency in their jobs. The intent by the Marines was to showcase what women in uniform were capable of doing and how professional they can look so that Nimitz might consider putting them in more significant positions in the Navy. Potter, however, notes that, “Nimitz, who disliked seeing women in uniform and anywhere near the war zone, was adamant against receiving them in the Territory of Hawaii.” He added that Nimitz “could not get used to women jumping up and snapping to attention when he entered a room.”¹⁴¹ Thus, Nimitz did not like women serving in the

¹³⁹ Potter, 37-43.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 262.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 287.

military because he was sexist and believed it was not their place to fight and die alongside men.

This is not an entirely surprising perspective for this time period in American history and elements of this type of thinking are still present in American armed forces today. Nimitz's views are also similar to the views that both Marshall and Eisenhower held.

Conclusions

After carefully considering the lives and leadership skills of these two Navy officers, it is evident in this monograph that King and Nimitz had dissimilar leadership styles. Indeed, their leadership styles reflected their upbringing in small towns, their work ethics, their desire to learn, their consideration or lack thereof for religion and morality, and their interest in working with subordinates. Current and future officers need to consider how these aspects of King's and Nimitz's leadership apply to their own leadership styles. All military leaders, both officers and enlisted, should carefully consider how these two leaders led. After careful reflection of these two leaders and a reflective consideration about how they lived their lives, each leader should consider their leadership style and how that impacts those they lead and serve as well as how the country is impacted by their leadership.

Both King and Nimitz were intellectually strong as students, and King more than Nimitz would admit this. Also, both had tireless work ethics and both understood the importance of that during World War II. Both committed themselves to the Navy but for entirely different reasons. King committed himself to service in the Navy but for personal gain. Nimitz on the other had served in the Navy selflessly and always worked to better the Navy. In short, he lived and breathed the Navy lifestyle, and he did all that he could do to change and improve it for those that followed.

Both expected much from subordinates, but King was brutal, harsh, and intolerant with those that he led. Nimitz, however, was more easygoing, warmer, and cordial, and he was genuinely concerned for subordinates and sought out their views. Much like Eisenhower, but dissimilar to King, he approached sailors with open ended questions to gauge their responses to issues, and he genuinely wanted to hear what they had to say and sailors knew this.

Due to their hard work and the mentorship they received, these men became prominent, successful military leaders. Nimitz's leadership style inspired officers of his time and hopefully

will continue to inspire officers today. King on the other hand continues to receive criticism for his abusive and confrontational leadership style as well as for his personal failings, and this monograph echoes those sentiments. Nonetheless, both came from humble, religiously focused beginnings in small rural towns, and both were well versed in Christian religious doctrine. Despite this, however, both diverged from their faiths. King occasionally used religion in operations orders, but he lived his life completely opposite to the teachings of his faith. Nimitz too left his faith in practice, but accepted his wife's more encompassing Unitarian faith that is arguably not Christian but deist in nature. Despite the fact that Nimitz did not openly practice his Lutheran faith, he did, however, live his life according to Lutheran beliefs and, to some degree, according to Unitarian principles. This was always evident with how he interacted with his wife and family and in how he served in the navy.

Both men set the navy as their number one priority, but King deliberately neglected his family and often did not spend his off duty time with them. Nimitz was completely opposite of King in this regard and was much closer and devoted to his family. In fact, he daily wrote to his wife when he was away and seriously considered her counsel on day-to-day operations in the navy and with his leadership. Unlike King, Nimitz honored his marital vows, kept promises that he made, and worked hard to fulfill his duty as both a sailor and husband. King, on the other hand, frequently gave in to temptation and was notorious for his adulterous acts. In addition, he often behaved dishonorably and acted in such a manner as to bring discredit upon himself and the Navy.

After comparing the leadership styles of Marshall, Eisenhower, and now King and Nimitz in this monograph, it is starkly clear that the most important leadership traits that benefited Eisenhower, Marshall and Nimitz were their senses of moral righteousness, honesty, and integrity. They understood their faith and were raised with a good Judeo-Christian understanding of what was right and wrong. King's lack of moral clarity is evident and it was precisely because of this that he failed as a leader. It is also evident that this important trait serves as the foundation

upon which other aspects of military leader development can occur. If missing or never developed in a leader, then it is likely that such a leader would do things that are merely in his or her self-interest rather than in the best interests of those that they lead. Thus, service members who are given the privilege of serving this great country must always remember that morality matters in leadership. Indeed, they are seen as national sentinels and Americans and the world are watching. George Washington believed this and once said, “Morality and faith are the pillars of our society. May we never forget that.”¹⁴² A more fitting quote to sum this monograph, I cannot imagine.

¹⁴² Robert A. Fitton. *Leadership: Quotations from the Military Tradition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 107.

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